

CURRENT EVENTS RESEARCH TOPICS

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: North Korea

TOPIC: North Korea has cancelled its armistice with South Korea. It has restarted an atomic reactor that was used to enrich uranium for bombs. It has closed access to South Koreans in their manufacturing joint venture. What has caused these actions? Is the youth and inexperience of North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, cause for concern? How is its ally China reacting?

SEARCH TERMS: North Korea AND (South Korea OR U.S. OR China)

HEALTH: Patent Ruling

TOPIC: Swiss pharmaceutical firm Novartis has lost a patent case in the Indian Supreme Court, which ruled that the drug they were trying to patent was not new. Indian patent law does not allow the practice known as evergreening, where companies make small changes to drugs and seek a new patent for them. This opens the door for India's makers of low-cost generic drugs to make and market it. Why is this ruling important? What is its impact in third-world countries? How does India's law differ from those of other countries?

SEARCH TERMS: India AND Novartis AND patent

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: President Obama in Israel

TOPIC: President Obama visited Israel and met with President Peres and Prime Minister Netanyahu. What was the focus and goals of these meetings? What are some of the significant historical places that the President toured and what role did these places play in history?

SEARCH TERMS: Obama AND Israel

SPORTS: March Madness/Final Four

TOPIC: The NCAA basketball championship is now down to the final four teams. What are the four teams and what are the strengths and weaknesses of each team? What 15th-seeded Florida college advanced beyond expectations and how?

SEARCH TERMS: NCAA AND basketball AND final four

SOCIAL STUDIES RESEARCH TOPICS

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Detroit State Takeover

TOPIC: The finances of bankrupt Detroit, Michigan have been taken over by Kevyn Orr, a state appointed emergency manager. How did the financial state of collapse? What plan does the state of Michigan have to restore Detroit to fiscal health? How is the automobile industry helping?

SEARCH TERMS: Detroit AND bankruptcy

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: End of an Era

TOPIC: Hugo Chavez, Venezuela's president, has died following a long struggle with cancer. His vice president, Nicolas Maduro, has succeeded him. How long was Chavez in power? What were his domestic priorities? How were his relations with other Latin American countries?

SEARCH TERMS: Hugo Chavez

CRIME AND LAW: Amanda Knox

TOPIC: The highest court in Italy has overturned Amanda Knox's acquittal on a charge of murdering her roommate. It is unlikely she will be extradited to stand trial again. What does this ruling say about the Italian justice system? Could an acquittal be overturned under U.S. law? If not, why not?

SEARCH TERMS: Amanda Knox

CRIME AND LAW: Julia Pierson

TOPIC: Julia Pierson has been appointed to be the first woman to head the U.S. Secret Service upon the retirement of current director Mark Sullivan. What is her current position and what are some key events in her professional background? What are the functions of the U.S. Secret Service?

SEARCH TERMS: Julia Pierson

ECONOMICS: American-US Airways Merger

TOPIC: American Airways and US Airways have had their merger approved by a bankruptcy court. This will create the world's largest airline. What were some of the specific areas that needed to be approved by the court? What was an aspect of the merger that the judge did not sign off on?

SEARCH TERMS: American AND (U.S. or US) AND Airways AND merger

ECONOMICS: Euro Crisis Continues

TOPIC: The Eurozone Crisis has moved to the island of Cyprus. The effort to salvage its banking system has led the government to seize a percentage of the assets within the banking system itself to prop up the remaining banks. What is the cause of the banks' indebtedness? What are they choosing to do to some bank account holders?

SEARCH TERMS: Cyprus AND banking crisis

ECONOMICS: Summly Sold

TOPIC: A 17-year-old Briton, Nick D'Aloisio, has sold a company he started, Summly, to Yahoo for millions of dollars. Summly is an app that summarizes content for better display on mobile devices. As part of the deal, the Summly app will be shut down, and its technology will be integrated into Yahoo. Who were some of the early investors in this company and how did they help run it? What does this and other recent acquisitions say about Yahoo's strategy?

SEARCH TERMS: Yahoo AND (Summly OR Nick D'Aloisio)

ECONOMICS: BRICS Rising

TOPIC: The BRICS nations have decided to fund a development bank for infrastructure projects at a meeting in South Africa. It is thought each country will provide \$10 billion in initial funding. Who are the BRICS nations? What are their relative economic strengths? What is a development bank and how does it work?

SEARCH TERMS: BRICS AND development bank

EDUCATION: Hamas and Schools

TOPIC: Hamas has proposed a law for Gaza that segregates the sexes at school after the age of nine. Most schools are already segregated. Since that is the case, why did Hamas act now?

SEARCH TERMS: Hamas AND Gaza AND single-sex education OR mixed-sex education)

EDUCATION: Student Clusters

TOPIC: The once frowned-upon practice of dividing students into groups of similar ability, once called ability grouping is returning in classrooms between the fourth and eighth grades according to a report by the Brookings Institution. What are teachers finding advantageous in using this practice and why had it been criticized? How has this practice ebbed and flowed over time and why?

SEARCH TERMS: classroom AND ability AND group* AND Brookings

HISTORY: Enrollment Act

TOPIC: It has been 150 years since the U.S. Congress passed the Enrollment Act in an effort to get more soldiers into the Union Army during the U.S Civil War. What were some controversial aspects of the Enrollment Act that caused rebellion and draft riots in New York City? What were the amendments to the act in the following two years that made it more acceptable to the public?

SEARCH TERMS: Enrollment Act OR Civil War Military Draft Act



HISTORY: Stonehenge

TOPIC: Mike Parker Pearson and a team of archaeologists have studied bodies buried at Stonehenge around 3,000 BC and have concluded that the site started as a burial place for elite families. Why did they conclude this? What are some of Parker Pearson's other theories about Stonehenge

SEARCH TERMS: Stonehenge AND Mike Parker Pearson

SOCIAL ISSUES: Australian Adoption Policy

TOPIC: Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard has formally apologized to the individuals who lost their children to adoption due to government policies on unwed mothers. These adoptions started around World War II and lasted until the 1970s. How were the mothers pressured to give up their children? What other redress has her government offered? What might have been some of the reasons this policy changed in the 1970s

SEARCH TERMS: Julia Gillard AND adoption AND apologies

SOCIAL ISSUES: North Dakota Abortion Law

TOPIC: North Dakota has enacted the nation's most restrictive abortion law. What are the specific restrictions that impact abortion in this law? What efforts in North Dakota led to this legislation?

SEARCH TERMS: North Dakota AND legislation

SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS

ENVIRONMENT: Pesticides

TOPIC: A recent study shows that as much as 2/3 of the pesticides receiving approval from the Environmental Protection Agency are dangerous due to a loophole in the approval process. What is the loophole and why hadn't it been corrected? What are some of the dangers posed by these pesticides?

SEARCH TERMS: EPA AND pesticides

ENVIRONMENT: Drought in New Zealand

TOPIC: New Zealand farmers are reducing their herds as the northern and eastern parts of the country continue to undergo drought. How long has the drought gone on? Are its causes known?

SEARCH TERMS: New Zealand AND drought

HEALTH: Health of Mummies

TOPIC: Scans of mummies from around the world reveal that about one-third of them had hardening of the arteries, a heart disease. The mummies came from Egypt, Peru, the American Southwest and the Aleutian Islanders. They ranged in date from around 3800 B.C. to the late 19th Century. Given the diversity of lifestyles and diets, what, if anything, does this reveal about heart disease?

SEARCH TERMS: Mummies AND atherosclerosis

HEALTH: Health Care Costs

TOPIC: The Society for Actuaries has released a study predicting medical insurance claim costs will jump an average of 32% as the Affordable Care Act moves more sick people with potential expensive health care costs into the pool. What states are expected to see the highest jumps, what are the expected percentages and what is driving the rates higher in those states? How is this expected to impact premiums?

SEARCH TERMS: health care AND costs

HEALTH: Oklahoma HIV Scare

TOPIC: Over 7000 patients of an oral surgeon in the Tulsa, Oklahoma area have been urged to be tested for HIV and hepatitis C after a patient with no known risk factors contracted both viruses, possibly due to the unsanitary equipment discovered at the surgeon's practice. What are the various questionable practices of the oral surgeon and how could they spread the viruses? What was the similar case in Colorado last year and what was done about it?

SEARCH TERMS: Oklahoma AND Scott Harrington AND HIV

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Solar Plane

TOPIC: The European solar plane, Solar Impulse, is preparing for its first crossing of the United States from San Francisco to New York City. How does the solar energy of this airplane work? Where has it traveled in the past and how well have those flights gone?

SEARCH TERMS: Solar Impulse AND (plane or airplane)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: The Age of the Universe

TOPIC: A new map of the universe based on data from the Planck space telescope has increased the age of the universe by 100 million years or so. It has also found less dark matter exists than previously thought, and is seen as proof of the inflation theory of the Big Bang. What was the Planck measuring? What is dark matter? What is the inflation theory?

SEARCH TERMS: Planck space telescope AND age of the universe

SPORTS RESEARCH TOPICS**SPORTS: Heat Streak**

TOPIC: This season, the Miami Heat have had a winning streak of 27 games, second only to the 33 game streak of the Los Angeles Lakers 1971-72 season. What is difference between the point-spreads of these two winning streaks? Who broke the Heat's streak and what was the game like?

SEARCH TERMS: Miami Heat AND streak

SPORTS: World Baseball Classic

TOPIC: The Dominican Republic has won the World Baseball Classic by beating Puerto Rico. What other countries were in this tournament? How did the U.S. do? How many players in the tournament were major leaguers?

SEARCH TERMS: World Baseball Classic

SPORTS: Algarve Cup

TOPIC: U.S. women's soccer team has won the Algarve Cup by beating Germany. It is their ninth victory in this invitational tournament. What is the Algarve Cup named for and where is it played? How old is the tournament? What other sides are multiple winners of the Cup?

SEARCH TERMS: Algarve Cup

ARTS AND LITERATURE RESEARCH TOPICS**FILM AND TELEVISION: Peabody Awards**

TOPIC: The Peabody Awards, which annually awards about 30-40 radio, TV, cable and digital media outlets for distinguished public service, have announced their winners. What 3 television networks each won two awards and for what programs? What blog won a Peabody this year?

SEARCH TERMS: Peabody Awards

FILM AND TELEVISION: German Miniseries

TOPIC: The German miniseries *Our Mothers, Our Fathers* is set in World War II. The series seeks to show through the characters' story arcs what that generation of Germans went through. It has outraged Poland instead. What is upsetting to the Polish? What was the last German miniseries to explore the same era?

SEARCH TERMS: Our Mothers, Our Fathers

LITERATURE: Nigerian Author

TOPIC: Nigerian author Chinua Achebe has died at age 82. He achieved fame with the publication of his first novel, "Things Fall Apart" and is considered a great figure in post-colonial African literature. What other books did he write? How did he get along with the government of Nigeria? What honors did he win?

SEARCH TERMS: Chinua Achebe

PERFORMING ARTS: Canadian Icon

TOPIC: Canadian country singer Stompin' Tom Connors has died. One of his biggest hits was the "Hockey Song" which is frequently played in hockey arenas. What were his other hits? What was his position in Canadian popular music? How did he get his nickname?

SEARCH TERMS: Stompin' Tom Connors

PERFORMING ARTS: Bowie Exhibition

TOPIC: The Victoria and Albert Museum in London is hosting an exhibition of 300 artifacts and costumes from the archives of rock musician David Bowie. It also includes music videos, among other items. What makes David Bowie's career particularly suited to such an exhibition? What was the recent musical news from him?

SEARCH TERMS: David Bowie AND Victoria and Albert Museum

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Latin American Art

TOPIC: A Swiss patron and a German curator collected 1,200 works of contemporary Latin American art. They are opening a museum, Casa Daros, for this collection in Rio de Janeiro. Who is the collector and who is the curator? Why were they able to amass such a large collection? Why did they choose Rio for the location of their museum? Why does the first exhibition feature the works of Colombian artists?

SEARCH TERMS: Casa Daros

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Prize Winner

TOPIC: Japanese architect Toyo Ito has won this year's Pritzker Prize. What is his style of architecture? What notable buildings has he designed? Who else has won this prize?

SEARCH TERMS: Toyo Ito AND Pritzker Prize

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Barbara Bloom

TOPIC: Sculptor Barbara Bloom has an exhibition of mixed media installation titled *As it were...So to speak: A Museum Collection in Dialog With Barbara Bloom*. What themes does her installation explore? How do the different forms of media work together in this exhibition?

SEARCH TERMS: Barbara Bloom AND As it were...So to speak

LITERATURE: Burgess Boys

TOPIC: Elizabeth Strout has written a follow-up to her Pulitzer-winning novel *Olive Kitteridge* called *The Burgess Boys*. What are the plots of these two books? What are the qualities in her writing that impress the critics?

SEARCH TERMS: Elizabeth Strout AND Burgess Boys

PERFORMING ARTS: The Nance

TOPIC: Playwright Douglas Carter Beane and Nathan Lane have opened in a new play called *The Nance* which portrays the life of a gay man working in burlesque in the 1930s New York City under Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. What are some of the dangers of gay life portrayed in the era of the play compared to contemporary times? How does the balance between burlesque comedy and tragic drama work in *The Nance*?

SEARCH TERMS: The Nance AND Beane

PEOPLE RESEARCH TOPICS

PEOPLE: Barbara Walters

TOPIC: Barbara Walters is retiring after a long career in broadcast journalism. What are some of the highlights of her career? What are some controversies?

SEARCH TERMS: Barbara Walters

PEOPLE: Anthony Lewis

TOPIC: New York Times columnist, journalist and author Anthony Lewis is mostly remembered for his pioneering work in covering legal matters with great knowledge and sophistication. What are some of his most acclaimed books? What were some of the qualities of his legal journalism that are now adopted by many other legal journalists today?

SEARCH TERMS: Anthony Lewis

PEOPLE: New Pope

TOPIC: Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio has been elected Pope in a conclave at the Vatican City. He has taken the name Francis, in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. What was notable about his time in Buenos Aires? How did he get on with the rulers of the country? How has he begun his papacy?

SEARCH TERMS: Pope Francis

PEOPLE: Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist

TOPIC: Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist has died. He was the final living conspirator against Hitler. What was his role in the plot? How did his father react to this involvement? What did he do after the war?

SEARCH TERMS: Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist

PEOPLE: George Lowe

TOPIC: George Lowe, a member of the first team to ascend Mt. Everest and a lifelong friend of Edmund Hillary, has died at age 89. He was in the trio of mountaineers who supported Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay to their final camp before the ascent. How did he meet Hillary? What other expeditions was he a member of?

SEARCH TERMS: George Lowe AND Everest

PEOPLE: Scott Prouty

TOPIC: Scott Prouty is a bartender whose recording of a speech by presidential candidate Mitt Romney at a private fundraising party had a profound impact on his campaign. What did Mitt Romney say at the fundraiser? Why did Scott Prouty make the video public?

SEARCH TERMS: Scott Prouty

PEOPLE: Jimmy Fallon

TOPIC: Jimmy Fallon has been named to succeed Jay Leno as host of the Tonight Show. How many people have hosted the Tonight Show, who were they, and what qualities did they bring to the show? What is the format for the Tonight Show and how has it influenced television?

SEARCH TERMS: Jimmy Fallon